

Sunday, Mar. 27, 2005

TIME Poll: A MAJORITY (53%) OF THOSE WHO CALL THEMSELVES EVANGELICALS SUPPORT REMOVING THE FEEDING TUBE, 41% OPPOSE REMOVAL OF THE FEEDING TUBE

New York – A majority (53%) of Americans surveyed who call themselves born again Christians or Evangelicals agree with the decision to remove Terri Schiavo's feeding tube, according to the latest TIME poll, conducted March 22-24, 2005. Of those who call themselves evangelicals, 41% say they oppose the decision to remove Schiavo's feeding tube.

Two-thirds of Americans (67%) surveyed say they would choose death over life if they were seriously injured but conscious, and had to rely on a ventilator or breathing tube to survive. Almost a quarter of those surveyed (23%) would want to continue living with a breathing tube.

More than half (52%) agree with the law in Oregon that allows terminally-ill adults to request that a physician administer a lethal dose of medication to end their life, 41% disagree with this Oregon law.

Almost half (48%) of those surveyed approve of the way President Bush is handling his job as President, down from 53% one week ago.

Congressional Intervention

Three-quarters (75%) of Americans surveyed believe that it was wrong for Congress to intervene in the Schiavo case and 20% think it was right for Congress to intervene. Meanwhile a majority (70%) believe that it was wrong for President Bush to intervene in the Schiavo case, and 24% say it was right. About two-thirds (65%) think that Congress and the President's intervention was rooted more in politics than in values and principles. A majority (68%) of Republicans say it was wrong for Congress to intervene. More than half (54%) of those surveyed said they would be either much more likely or somewhat more likely to vote against their Congressman if he or she voted to move the Schiavo case to the federal courts.

Removal of Feeding Tube

Three-quarters (76%) of those surveyed say that they have been following the Schiavo case either very closely or somewhat closely, 14% have not followed very closely and 10% have not been following the case at all. A majority of Americans (59%) either agree strongly or agree somewhat with the decision of the Florida courts to remove Schiavo's feeding tube. One-third (34%) either disagree strongly or disagree somewhat with that decision.

What If This Happened to You?

More than half (55%) say they would remove Schiavo's feeding tube if they were her guardian, 34% would not remove her feeding tube. A majority (69%) say they would want their guardian to remove the feeding tube if they were in Schiavo's place. About one-quarter (23%) of those surveyed are "absolutely sure" they would not remove the feeding tube as Schiavo's guardian. A little less than one-in-five (17%), are "absolutely sure" they would not want their feeding tube removed by their guardian.

Schiavo Family Conflict

Only 39% say that Schiavo's parents should be allowed to overrule the wishes of her husband as legal guardian to remove the tube. A majority (54%) say that her parents do not have the right to overrule the wishes of her husband.

Religion's Role

Those who attend worship once a week or more are evenly divided (48% agree – 45% disagree) with the decision to remove Schiavo's feeding tube. Almost three-quarters (73%) of those who rarely or never attend religious services agree with the decision to remove Schiavo's feeding tube. More than half of frequent worshipers (59%) disagree with the Oregon law allowing physician assisted suicide, while a majority (71%) of non-worshippers agree with this law.

Living Wills

A vast majority (93%) have heard of the term "living will." About one-third (37%) say that they currently have a living will. A majority (69%) who say that do not currently have a living will have thought about drafting one or discussing their wishes with family in response to the case.

Bush Ratings: Social Security, Economy, Iraq, War on Terror

Almost one-third (31%) approve of the way Bush is handling social security issues, down from 37% approval according to a TIME poll taken one week ago. More than half (54%) disapprove of the way Bush is handling the economy, 42% approve. On Bush's emphasis on moral values and religion, 58% approve and 33% disapprove. On Bush's handling of the situation in Iraq, 44% approve and 52% disapprove. On Bush's handling of the war on terrorism, 52% approve and 43% disapprove.

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This TIME poll was conducted by telephone March 22-24, 2005 among a random sample of 1,010 adults, age 18 and older throughout America. The margin of error for the entire sample is approximately +/-3 percentage points. The margin of error is higher for subgroups. Surveys are subject to other error sources as well, including sampling coverage error, recording error, and respondent error. Schulman, Ronca, & Bucuvalas (SRBI) Public Affairs designed the survey and conducted all interviewing. The full TIME questionnaire and trend data may be found at: www.srbi.com. Poll results available upon request.

Media Contacts: Nadine Ferber, 212-522-4714 or Debra Richman, -6856

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